

Department of Veterans Affairs
Voluntary Service

63rd Annual
National Advisory Committee Meeting
Report

May 20 - 22, 2009
Houston, Texas



VAVS NAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, May 20, 2009 8 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by NAC Executive Committee Chairperson, Ed Hartman.

Goals and Objectives: Mr. Hartman asked the members to review the goals and objectives of the VAVS NAC Committee:

1. Provide the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) an opportunity to conduct its business in a manner that assures achievement of all responsibilities mandated by its charter.
2. Provide NAC orientation to local and national VAVS Representatives and Deputies.
3. Present to all member organization representatives an overview of current and pending VAVS policies and procedures.
4. Foster full and open communications among the member organizations, their representatives, and the Voluntary Service Central Office and field staff.
5. Provide the NAC member organizations with the educational and training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer programs with special emphasis on methods to recruit, retain, motivate, and recognize volunteers.
6. Furnish the NAC member organizations the opportunity to hear from VA leadership concerning key issues within the Department.
7. Arrange for NAC review of, and action on, recommendations.
8. Honor the national recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award: Paige Swartz, student volunteer at the Cleveland VA Medical Center, Cleveland, Ohio.
9. Recognize Ms. Leslie Buchman, VA Voluntary Service Program Manager (Retired) at the VA Medical Center, San Francisco, California, as recipient of the Voluntary Service Award for Excellence.
10. Recognize the following award recipients for the American Spirit Awards: Mr. Randy LeStourgeon, VAVS Program Manager, VA Medical Center, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, for Student Recruitment Category; Mr. Joseph Dooley, VAVS Program Manager, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial VA Medical Center, Bedford, Massachusetts, for Corporate Recruitment

Category; Ms. Nancy Babcock, Chief, Community and Volunteer Service, VA Medical Center, Battle Creek, Michigan, for Military Recruitment Category; Mr. John DeSoto, VAVS Program Assistant, Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System, for Senior Recruitment Category.

Roll Call: Executive Committee attendance was duly recorded.

Additions/Revisions to the October 2008 EC Meeting Minutes: Judith McCombs stated the following concerns and suggestions: the 2008-2009 two-year appointment list has the organizations in reversed terms; there is no indication of a modifications in the minutes; there should not be a motion in VAVS Partner's Inc. report; main motion in regards to Future Annual Meeting Plans should be specific (p. 8); no attached membership listing. Laura Balun said that appointment list has revised and appointment letters have been re-sent. Ms. McCombs moved to accept the minutes with revisions; the motion was seconded by Del Turner. ***Motion carried.***

Host's Welcome: Donna Moss, External Affairs Executive, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, Texas, welcomed everyone.

63rd Annual Meeting Agenda Overview: Steve Moynihan encouraged everyone to pick up a program booklet. There are 63 VAVS staffers at the meeting, with a good number of first-time attendees. Mr. Moynihan went over the schedule of events for the meeting. There are 310 attendees registered for this year's conference, with walk-ins still arriving.

VAVS Abbreviated Program Update: Ms. Laura Balun, Director, Voluntary Service Office, announced that this meeting is Steve Moynihan's last one as staff, as he is retiring.

She encouraged reps to share with their leadership how valuable volunteers are to the program and Veterans. Ms. Balun shared a specific story to illustrate her point.

Ms. Balun discussed the new purchase card policy and how it may affect donations. More documentation may be required with donations to show specific instructions for usage of funds.

Ms. Balun thanked organizations who have donated funds for Wii systems at various facilities. She stated we have a demonstration of patient activities and the Wii system during the Health Fair.

VHA Report: Mr. Everett Chasen, Chief Communications Officer, announced that this will be his last VAVS meeting, as he is retiring.

The nation can learn from VHA's use of electronic health records. The system is set to merge with the Department of Defense's electronic health records system.

The search is on for a new Under Secretary of Health, since Dr. Michael Kussman has retired.

For the first five years after deployment, there is a significantly higher rate of fatal crashes among returning Veterans than among people of the same age in the general population. The Welcome Home program encourages safe driving, and Richard Petty is the celebrity spokesperson. The Petty organization is working with the VA on a possible returning-Veterans-centric driving re-training program.

3,000 people have been rescued through the Suicide Prevention hotline.

Mr. Chasen discussed the endoscopy equipment issue: some machines used for the procedure at a few facilities may not have been thoroughly sanitized. The VA asked Veterans who may have been affected by this situation to come back and be tested.

Subcommittee Reports:

Recommendations: Judy Twete reported that there are three recommendations, plus one submitted that morning by The American Legion:

1. (Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.) It is recommended that VA create a form to capture monetary and non-monetary donations similar to VA form 10-7033 Recreation Activity Worksheet for accuracy in the recording generous donations of organizations or individuals.

The Executive Committee suggests approval.

2. (American Legion Auxiliary and The American Legion) It is recommended that with the 'Technology Age' upon us that an 'Opt-in' check box be included on the NAC Membership Change form to give VAMCs permission to send communications, including distribution of minutes and materials, electronically via email.

The Executive Committee suggests approval.

3. (The National Executive Committee) It is recommended that a brochure be developed appealing to younger volunteers supporting recreational activities for Veterans, i.e., kayaking, cycling, sailing, skiing, golfing, etc.

The Executive Committee suggests approval.

Judy Twete read aloud the newly-submitted recommendation:

"4. (The American Legion) VHA Handbook 1620.03, "VAVS Recognition For State Veterans Home (SVH) Volunteers" establishes guidelines for VAVS offices at VA facilities in recognizing volunteers for their service to Veterans receiving care at SVH. The recommendation is for VAVS to establish an MOU similar to 1620.03 for Warrior

Transition Units (WTUs) nationally. Currently, volunteers from the WTUs are recognized as occasional volunteers rather than regularly-scheduled volunteers. The MOU will help VAVS recruit younger volunteers stationed at the WTUs and allow current VAVS volunteers to volunteer on the bases.”

Jacob Gadd from the American Legion explained the recommendation, saying that it provides a two-way street: VAVS volunteers could help WTUs and WTUs could help at VA facilities. It would help engage younger volunteers.

Laura Balun said that procedure would need to be explored if this recommendation is accepted. There was discussion on how WTUs could serve at VAMCs and if this would be opened up to every base.

Jacob Gadd moved to accept the recommendation, Ralph Wozniak seconded. ***The motion carried.*** A question was asked about how to help get this going; Ms. Balun said now that the recommendation has been approved, VHA will take a look at the process.

Judith McCombs asked about the second recommendation, saying something had been passed a few years back about a pilot program. Ms. Balun said that there wasn't a pilot program.

NAC Volunteer of the Year: Ed Hartman said nominations were filed this year, but they didn't fit the requirements. Mr. Hartman reminded the reps that each organization can only nominate one person.

Membership: Del Turner said there is a list of organizations that qualify to be members.

Recruitment: Col. Charles Gallina said that while the number of volunteers and hours have been going down, there are about 20 organizations whose hours have increased.

An invitation-only meeting will be held this evening for the organizations whose hours increased to see what they are doing differently to see such improvement. Col. Gallina gave some suggestions for recruitment strategies, and also stressed the importance of retention.

(Recess.)

(Whereupon, the meeting was resumed.)

NAC SOP Revisions: Judith McCombs went over the proposed changes to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which were handed out in the packets. She added more details to the mission statement for the NAC Volunteer of the Year Award, among other revisions.

Ms. McCombs moved that the proposed changes to the NAC SOP be adopted, Helen Weaver seconded. ***The motion carried.***

Parke Board Update: Jacob Gadd, vice-president of the James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board, gave the update.

Four positions on the Parke Board need to be filled at this meeting. Nominations are: Joyce Parke, American Red Cross; William Kilgore, AMVETS; Marcie Clark, Help Hospitalized Veterans; Margaret Haas, Marine Corps League Auxiliary. The election will be held after the Parke Luncheon.

Treasurer's Report: presented by Christopher Slawinski, treasurer of the Parke Memorial Fund. Mr. Slawinski passed out the consolidated results of the 2007-08 audit. Donations last year exceeded expectations. Because of concerns about a potential downturn in donations, only one scholarship is being given this year. There was some discussion on unpaid scholarships.

VAVS Partners, Inc. Treasurer's Report: Ed Hartman said Jerry Butler had nothing to report, but will have a report prepared for the October meeting.

VAVS NAC Data Report: presented by Marty Naugher, Voluntary Service Specialist. Marty discussed the disparities in the VHA-37 reports for local VAVS representatives and deputy representatives due to how the information is recorded. He stressed the importance of national representatives and deputy representatives working with their local representatives and VAVS program managers to make sure hours are coded correctly and local VAVS members know the importance of signing in and getting the proper credit, under the proper code.

National Salute Report: Ms. Laura Balun, Director, Voluntary Service Office, presented. James Reynolds (from *Days of Our Lives*) is the Chair for 2009. She stated Mr. Reynolds has done a fabulous job in his role as salute chair. This year there were four concerts sponsored by Help Hospitalized Veterans, and next year there will be eleven.

Ralph Wozniak shared a story about his experience at one of the concerts. Mike Lynch said that the concerts were extremely successful. Helen Weaver said that the Cleveland concert was held at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Unfinished Business:

Recruitment of Drivers: Ms. Balun said that the White House wants to help VAVS recruit volunteers during Summer for Service. More volunteer drivers are needed, as well as volunteers for Welcome Home events and Stand Downs.

Future 2010 Annual Meeting Plans: Steve Moynihan said that the next

meetings will be at the Hyatt Regency in Cincinnati. The location will be used two years in a row to get better rates and accommodations. The 2010 meeting will be April 7-9, and the 2011 meeting will be April 27-30.

New Business:

Fall 2009 EC Meeting: Laura Balun said that the plan is for the fall EC meeting to be in Washington, DC. Members would need to make their own reservations at the Mark Center Hilton (in Alexandria), but the meetings would take place at CO. The dates are October 22-24, 2009.

The dates and hotel have since been revised. The EC meeting is scheduled to be held in Washington, DC, October 16-17, 2009. The hotel is the Hilton Crystal City at Washington Reagan National Airport.

Appointments:

Recommendations Subcommittee: Mark Potter, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., has been asked to serve as Recommendations chair. Frances Costa, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Auxiliary, and Mike Walsh, DAV, will also serve on the subcommittee.

Vice Chair, NAC Executive Committee: Fran Costa, DAV Auxiliary, has been appointed Vice Chair.

Good of the Order: Steve Moynihan thanked everyone for helping with sponsorships for this meeting. Ms. Balun thanked Mike Lynch with Help Hospitalized Veterans for donating to VAVS Partners, Inc for transportation for this meeting. Del Turner passed out information about Dining with Dignity.

Judith McCombs moved to adjourn the meeting, Ed Hartman seconded. ***The motion carried.***

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

OPENING BUSINESS SESSION

Wednesday, May 20, 2009 - 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Call to Order: The 63rd Annual Meeting of the VA Voluntary Services National Advisory Committee was called to order by Ed Hartman, Chairman, National Executive Committee.

Presentation of Colors: The colors were presented by Klein Collins Air Force Junior ROTC.

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Karen Shaver, Commander, Chapter 8 Women Veterans of America.

Invocation: William D. Ensminger, Chaplain, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, delivered the invocation.

Welcome: Ed Hartman introduced Dr. Blase A. Carbello, Acting Director, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, who welcomed everyone to Houston, the birthplace of the VA hospital system.

Opening Remarks: E. A. “Buddy” Grantham, Director, Office of Veterans’ Affairs, City of Houston, welcomed the attendees to Houston. The office of veterans’ affairs was created by the mayor of Houston to work specifically with Veterans. Mr. Grantham read a proclamation from the mayor making May 20, 2009 Department of Veterans’ Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Day in Houston, Texas.

Mr. Hartman thanked Bryan Dyck, Voluntary Service Specialist, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, and his staff for their help with meeting planning.

Roll Call: The VAVS NAC was established in 1946 and became a federally chartered advisory committee in 1973. The purpose of the NAC is to advise the Secretary, through the Under Secretary of Health, and other members of the VHA Central Office staff, on how to coordinate and promote volunteer activities within the VA healthcare facilities and on matters pertaining to volunteerism.

The roll call of the NAC members and National Representatives and Deputy Representatives of the member organizations was duly taken. Of the 57 NAC Member organizations listed, 67 were present.

Opening Remarks and Meeting Objectives: Mr. Hartman read the Goals and Objectives for the meeting.

Approval of the 62nd VAVS NAC Meeting Minutes: Mr. Hartman said there was one correction: Silver Star Families was in attendance.

Del Turner moved to approve the minutes, Jacob Gadd seconded. ***The motion carried.***

Veterans’ History Project: Mr. Hartman introduced Jeffrey Lofton, Public Affairs and Program Specialist, Library of Congress. The Veterans’ History Project (VHP) is an oral history project which collects and preserves the first-hand recollections of US Veterans and makes them available to the general public.

Mr. Lofton shared a video and encouraged the attendees to get involved with the VHP. Beginning Thursday at 9am, VAVS volunteers from Houston will be recording stories from Veterans who are in attendance at this meeting.

VHA Update: presented by Ev Chasen, Chief Communications Officer. Mr. Chasen reported on the endoscope sterilization story.

Suicide prevention was also discussed. In the Department of the Army, the number of suicides among active duty Army soldiers has increased recently. VA figures are a little behind. From 2001-'06, there has been no appreciable rise in the number of suicides among Veterans. 1-800-273-TALK is the number for the suicide prevention hotline, staffed 24-7 by trained caseworkers.

Mr. Chasen discussed the Welcome Home program for driver safety. The proposed budget for the VHA is great; the President has asked that by 2013, the number of Veterans served increase by 500,000.

Sec. Shinseki was planning to attend this meeting, but had to speak to Congress about the budget. Mr. Chasen thanked the attendees for their service to Veterans.

VAVS Update: Laura Balun, Director, Voluntary Service Office, thanked Mr. Chasen for all his work. She gave her report and discussed:

- There were about \$223.9 million worth of volunteer hours, and \$82.2 million in cash and item donations.
- FY 2008 priorities: developing a tracking mechanism for volunteer training requirements, supporting Welcome Home Celebrations, developing materials for the patient feeding volunteer program, recruitment and retention.
- FY 2009 priorities: developing volunteer training materials for adaptive activities, expanding the National Salute Program to include community-based events for Veterans and their families (such as concerts), developing orientation and training materials for National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Volunteers, and coordinating training materials to be posted on the web.
- The White House's Summer for Service program will support Welcome Home celebrations, Stand Down events and recruitment of volunteer drivers.
- The lack of recommendations from last year's meeting.
- Current issues: Welcome Home celebrations, new volunteer assignments (kayaking, bicycling), and voter registration.
- The Caregiver Respite Program is growing, providing support for caregivers.
- National Salute to VA Veteran Patients. James Reynolds is this year's chair. The community concerts sponsored by HHV were very successful. VA stations which will host the 2010 concerts: Baltimore, Battle Creek, Charleston, Chicago

(Jesse Brown & Hines), Cleveland, Fayetteville, Kansas City, Memphis, Prescott, and St. Louis.

Special Tribute to Volunteers: Ms. Balun introduced Elliott Kidd, VAVS Program Manager, Leavenworth, KS, who sang a song in honor of the volunteers.

Closing Remarks: Mr. Hartman recognized the American Legion, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Vietnam Veterans of America who are sponsoring the opening reception.

The business session was adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

BUSINESS SESSION
Thursday, May 21, 2009 - 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Roll Call: Mr. Hartman said that roll was being called again because not all of the national reps were at the front of the room the day before. Mr. Hartman then made various announcements.

Call to Order: The session was called to order by National Executive Committee Chairman Edward Hartman.

Pledge of Allegiance: led by Francis "Arch" Ethan, Military Order of the Cootie.

VA's Suicide Prevention: Mr. Hartman introduced Jan Kemp, R.N., Ph. D. Dr. Kemp showed a Public Service Announcement (PSA) and discussed the VA National Suicide Prevention Hotline, started two years ago.

Dr. Kemp gave a brief overview with statistics about suicide in the general population and in the veteran population. Veterans may be at higher risk for suicide. Dr. Kemp shared some myths about suicide. The intent to die can override rational thinking.

Operation SAVE: know the Signs of suicidal thinking, Ask the questions, Validate the person's experience, and Encourage treatment and expedite getting help. It takes the courage and strength of a warrior to ask for help. Dr. Kemp shared a specific story of a suicidal woman the staffers at the hotline were able to save, and showed another PSA aimed at friends and family of Veterans.

Dr. Kemp answered questions about: care packages, returning soldiers from OIF/OEF, and the increase of suicide numbers among recent Veterans and Vietnam Veterans.

Social Media: Mr. Hartman introduced Joyce Bounds, Director, VHA Web Communications. Ms. Bounds showed how the VA is using YouTube and other social media, including Facebook and blogs. The VA is now on Second Life.

Ms. Bounds showed the attendees the mobile version of the VA website. She

explained Twitter and how the VA can use it. The VA has a Flickr account also.

Ms. Bounds answered questions about IT allowing access to social media sites and what information is needed to use YouTube.

Women's Health: Mr. Hartman introduced Amy G. Hertz, Deputy Chief Consultant, Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care. The number of female Veterans enrolling and coming to the VA for care is increasing. 450,000 female Veterans were enrolled in VA at the end of fiscal year 2008.

There are over 102,000 female Veterans from OEF/OIF; 45% are enrolled in VA. There need to be clinics with flexible hours to meet the needs of young, working women. Family planning issues and sexual health (among other health concerns) need to be addressed by the system. There are few primary care clinicians in the VA who are trained in women's health.

VA has just completed a national survey of women Veterans. The VA is working to make sure emergency rooms have accessible GYN services. Ms. Hertz said that her office's aim is to change the language, practice and culture in VA to be more inclusive of women Veterans. VA is preparing for an increasing number of women coming in and recognizes that women have unique and complex health care needs. Ms. Hertz showed a video about women Veterans.

Mr. Hartman asked people to fill out their ballots for the Parke Memorial Board.

American Spirit Awards Presentation: presented by Laura Balun to: Mr. Randy LeSturgeon, VAVS Program Manager, VA Medical Center, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, for Student Recruitment Category; Mr. Joseph Dooley, VAVS Program Manager, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial VA Medical Center, Bedford, Massachusetts, for Corporate Recruitment Category; Ms. Nancy Babcock, Chief, Community and Volunteer Service, VA Medical Center, Battle Creek, Michigan, for Military Recruitment Category; Mr. John DeSoto, VAVS Program Assistant, Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System, for Senior Recruitment Category.

VA Voluntary Service Award for Excellence: presented by Laura Balun to this year's distinguished recipient: Ms. Leslie Buchman, VA Voluntary Service Program Manager (Retired), VA Medical Center, San Francisco, California.

Mr. Hartman asked attendees to please send in nominations for the VAVS Volunteer of the Year Awards, as none that fit the requirements were sent in for this year.

The Business Session was recessed at 10:53 a.m.

BUSINESS SESSION
Friday, May 22, 2009 - 8:30 a.m. -11:30 a.m.

Call to Order: The session was called to order by National Executive Committee Chairman Ed Hartman.

Pledge of Allegiance: led by Lynn Young, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Vet Center Expansion: Mr. Hartman introduced Louann Engle, Regional Manager, South Central Region, Readjustment Counseling Service. The mission of the Vet Center program is to provide services not just to the combat veteran, but also their family and extended family. The centers provide a broad range of counseling services and unique outreach opportunities. Centers are located in non-medical, easily-accessible facilities. Confidentiality is maintained at all costs.

Vet centers provide bereavement counseling, drug & alcohol referrals, benefits assistance referrals, with flexible hours. There is never a cost for these services.

Patient Centered Care: Mr. Hartman introduced Linda Belton, Network Director, Organizational Health. Ms. Belton focused on veteran-centered care. Non-institutional alternatives to care are important.

Veteran-centered care is a fully engaged partnership of veteran, family and health-care team, established through continuous healing relationships provided in optimal healing environments in order to improve health outcomes and the veteran's experience of care.

Twelve principles of patient centered care: honoring the veteran's expectation of safe, high-quality, accessible care; enhancing the quality of human interactions and therapeutic alliances; soliciting and respecting the veteran's values and needs; systemizing the coordination, continuity, and integration of care; making medical library and technology available to vets; incorporating the nutritional, cultural, and nurturing aspects of food; providing for physical comfort and management of pain; ensuring emotional and spiritual support; encouragement to involve family and friends; healing environmental factors; introducing the creative arts into the healing environment; to deliver a patient-centered environment, you have to have fully-engaged and satisfied employees and volunteers.

Adaptive Recreational Activities Follow-up: presented by Ralph Marche, VAVS Program Manager, VA Boston Healthcare System. Through adaptive sports, healthy lifestyles, healthy communities, and family are promoted. Volunteer roles: certified instructors, support staff, preparing equipment, transportation, training partners, scorers and administrative.

The National Games have expanded to six events. These include the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (the largest wheelchair athletic meet in the world), the National Veterans Golden Age Games, the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic, the National Veterans TEE Tournament and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Veterans Canteen Service: Marilyn Iverson, Director, Veterans Canteen Service, gave a short history of the Veterans Canteen Service and explained how the service works. Ms. Iverson explained the Voluntary Services Promotional Account. She offered an introductory DVD explaining the program to anyone who wanted one.

(Recess.)

(Whereupon, the meeting was resumed.)

Subcommittee Reports:

Membership: Report wasn't presented because Del Turner, the sole member of the committee, was not in attendance.

Recommendations: presented by Judy Twete, Chair. Ms. Twete read the recommendations:

1. (Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.) It is recommended that VA create a form to capture monetary and non-monetary donations similar to VA form 10-7033 Recreation Activity Worksheet for accuracy in the recording generous donations of organizations or individuals.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. Fleet Reserve Association moved to approve this recommendation; the motion was seconded by National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. ***The motion carried.***

2. (American Legion Auxiliary and The American Legion) It is recommended that with the 'Technology Age' upon us that an 'Opt-in' check box be included on the NAC Membership Change form to give VAMCs permission to send communications, including distribution of minutes and materials electronically via email.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. Sons of the American Legion moved to approve this recommendation; Fleet Reserve Association seconded the motion. ***The motion carried.***

3. (The National Executive Committee) It is recommended that a brochure be developed appealing to younger volunteers supporting recreational activities for Veterans, i.e., kayaking, cycling, sailing, skiing, golfing, etc.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary moved to approve the recommendation; Forty & Eight seconded the motion. ***The motion carried.***

4. (The American Legion) VHA Handbook 1620.03 VAVS recommendation for state veterans home volunteers establishes a guideline for state veterans home volunteers to receive confirmation from VAVS for hours of service. VAVS established a MoU similar to 1620.03 for warrior transition units nationally. Volunteers from the warrior transition units are recognized as occasional volunteers rather than regularly-scheduled currently. The MoU will help VAVS recruit younger volunteers stationed at the warrior transition units and allow current VAVS volunteers to volunteer on the bases that have WTUs.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. Sons of the American Legion moved to approve the recommendation; American Ex-Prisoners of War seconded the motion. ***The motion carried.***

Standard Operating Procedures Ad Hoc Committee: presented by Judith McCombs, Chair. Ms. McCombs went over the revisions to the SOP.

Recruitment: reported by Col. Charles Gallina, Chair. While progress has been made in more than 20 NAC organizations, the total numbers of volunteers and hours continue to decrease. Recruitment is a full-time, year-round responsibility.

Col. Gallina went over VAVS recruitment strategy. The goal is to increase the total number of volunteers and hours 10%-20% at each VAMC, while lowering the average/median volunteer age to 55-60.

Mr. Hartman thanked National Salute Chair and actor James Reynolds for his work. Mr. Reynolds spoke to the attendees about his experience and thanked them for their dedication.

Presentation on Next Year's Meeting: Presented by Tracy Butts, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Medical Center, Cincinnati. Ms. Butts recommended the food items that Cincinnati is best known for: ice cream, ribs, and chili.

Closing Remarks: Mr. Hartman asked Ev Chasen to join him on stage for the closing. Mr. Chasen thanked the VAVS staff, the hotel staff, and all the attendees for their support.

Mr. Hartman said that although he won't have official ties to the group after this year's meeting, he will see the attendees in Cincinnati. He thanked everyone for their support during his nine years of involvement with VAVS.

Mr. Hartman introduced a video slideshow made by Marty Naugher.

Benediction: Barbara Jeffreys, The Salvation Army, closed the meeting with prayer.

The VAVS NAC 63rd Annual Meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Educational Workshops

Volunteering Outside the Office: Virtual Volunteer Assignments

Faculty: Mark Frazee, VAVS Program Manager, Dayton VAMC

Any volunteer who completes the majority of their tasks off-site is a virtual volunteer. All staff who work with virtual volunteers are committed to responding to email regarding volunteerism within 48 hours of receipt. Mr. Frazee went through some of the requirements for virtual volunteering and some of the possible opportunities for virtual volunteering.

Planetree: You and Patient-Centered Care

Faculty: Marianne Davis, Chief, Voluntary Service, Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System; Lorelei Winn, Chief, Voluntary Service, San Diego VA Medical Center

Planetree was started in 1978 in San Francisco, with the focus on patient-centered healthcare. Ms. Davis and Ms. Winn discussed the 10 components of the Planetree Model: human interactions; importance of family, friends and social support; architectural design conducive to health and healing; empowering patients through information and education; importance of the nutritional and nurturing aspects of food; healing arts: nutrition for the soul; spirituality: the importance of inner resources; the importance of the human touch; complementary therapies: expanding patient choices; and healthy communities: expanding the boundaries of healthcare.

Youth Volunteers

Faculty: Sadie Stewart, Assistant VAVS Program Manager, Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System

Ms. Stewart discussed her FAST method of recruiting youth volunteers: Be Flexible and Available, and let the students know they will gain Skills and work with a Trained staff. Students are very efficient and need to be kept busy; they must have an assignment. Ms. Stewart discussed potential youth volunteer assignments and the best way to find youth volunteers.

Bridging the Generation Gap

Faculty: Sharon Croteau, VAVS Program Manager, VA Connecticut Healthcare System

This is the first time in history when four generations have been working and/or volunteering together at the VA Hospital system. Ms. Croteau discussed how frames of reference for the different generations differ and went over a generalized view of how to manage and recruit different generations.

